

THE
DEFENDERS

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THE DEFENDERS™

IF I CAN'T TAKE
OVER YOUR *MINDS*,
DEFENDERS--THEN
I'LL TAKE YOUR
LIVES INSTEAD!



BUCKLER'S
ADKINS

HE'S BACK!

NEBULON,
THE CELESTIAL MAN!

The mysterious **DR. STRANGE!** The vibrant **VALKYRIE!** The high-flying **NIGHTHAWK!** The incredible **HULK!** Evil-doers **TREMBLE** at the names—for these four form the crux of the greatest **NON-TEAM** in history, heroes called together only when the need arises—to battle **MENACES** that threaten the security—or the very **LIFE**—of the planet **EARTH!**

Stan Lee
PRESENTS: **THE DYNAMIC DEFENDERS!**

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I THINK WE'RE ALL **BoZos** IN THIS BOOK!

THE PLACE:
INSIDE A FLYING
SAUCER HURLING
THROUGH EARTH'S
IONOSPHERE.

THE PARTICIPANTS: NEBULON, THE CELESTIAL MAN (THE SPARKLY ONE) A SCHOOL OF LUBBERDITES (THE SCALY ONES)—AND JACK MORRIS, WHOSE CONSCIOUSNESS RESIDES IN THE BRAIN OF CHONDU, THE MYSTIC, WHICH ITSELF HAS BEEN TRANSPLANTED TO THE BODY OF NIGHTHAWK. (THAT'S NIGHTHAWK'S OWN BRAIN JACK'S CLUTCHING IN HIS, ER, NIGHTHAWK'S SWEATY PALMS.)

YOU DOUBT MY
SINCERITY,
NIGHTHAWK? OF
COURSE—AND WITH
GOOD REASON:

WHEN LAST YOU
SAW ME, 'T WAS MY
INTENT TO PURCHASE
YOUR WORLD AND
FLOOD IT, BY MELTING
ITS POLAR CAPS."

THE OCCASION: AN
UNVEILING. NEBULON
PRESENTS IN SCALE-
MODEL MINIATURE
HIS VISION OF
EARTH TO-COME.

BUT I'VE
CHANGED SINCE
THEN, WING-
CAPED ONE.

G-G-LAD TO
HEAR IT, G-BUT...
COULD I HEAR IT
A LITTLE
SOFTER?

I'M RIGHT
NEXT TO YOU,
YOU DON'T
HAVE TA
YELL.

"DEFENDERS #14...MAY"

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OF COURSE. MY APOLOGIES. AND YOU ARE DUE AN **EXPLANATION** AS WELL-- OF HOW I SURVIVED OUR PREVIOUS ENCOUNTER.

PITTED AGAINST THE SORCERY OF DR. STRANGE, MY DIMENSION-SPANNING POWERS OVERLOADED.

I WAS HURLED OUT OF THIS REALITY, ACROSS THE PLANES OF EXISTENCE--

--TO THE LAND OF THE SCIENTIST-PHILOSOPHERS KNOWN AS LUDBERDITES. THEIR VIEW OF THE UNIVERSE--THAT HIGHER BEINGS BORE AN OBLIGATION TO IMPROVE THE LOT OF THEIR INFERIORS--INTRIGUED ME. IN TIME, UNDER THEIR TUTELAGE, I EMBRACED IT AS MY OWN.

"OF ALL THE WORLDS I'D VISITED IN MY CAREER AS AN INTER-STELLAR GEOLOGIST--YOURS WAS BY FAR THE MOST INFERIOR, THE MOST IN NEED OF SALVATION.

"SO THE LUDBERDITES AND I RETURNED TO EARTH TO COLLECT SPECIMENS--TO PROBE THEIR MINDS FOR YOUR RACE'S COMMON CONCEPT OF PEACE."

"AS SEEN LAST ISH.--M.W.

WITH OUR SUPERIOR SCIENCE, NIGHTHAWK, WE INTEND TO REALIZE MAN'S SEMINAL DREAM. INDEED, THE PROCESS HAS ALREADY BEGUN.

DO YOU APPROVE?
WILL YOU AID US?

YEAH. SURE. SOUNDS KEENO.

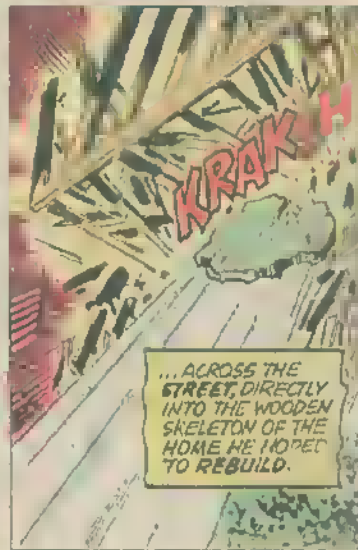
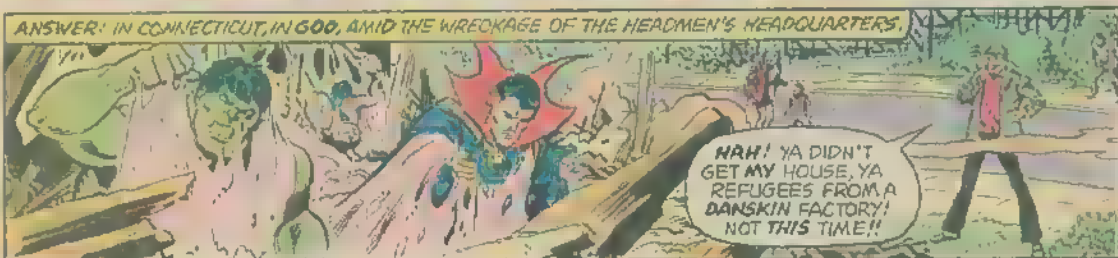
WHAT AM I GOING TO DO? NIGHTHAWK MUST KNOW THIS CHARACTER, BUT I CAN'T EVEN GUESS AT HIS REAL INTENTIONS--!

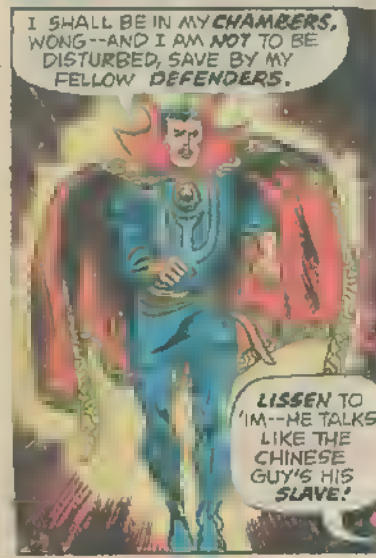
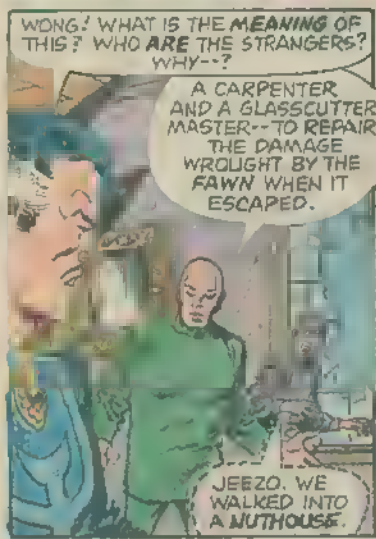
EXCELLENT. THEN YOU SHALL JOIN OUR OTHER SPECIMENS!

"IT WILL BE MOST ENLIGHTENING TO ADD A TRULY HEROIC MODE OF THOUGHT TO OUR COLLECTION."

CISSY-- LOOK! ANOTHER NEW ARRIVAL!

HUH?! WHERE--?





UPSTAIRS, THE CRYSTAL OF AGAMOTTO BATHES THE RICH, DARK WOOD AND ROCCO APPPOINTMENTS OF THE MEDITATION CHAMBER IN A WARM, YET UNEARTHLY, GLOW, BUT...

I CAN FIND NO TRACE OF JACK OR KYLE ANYWHERE ON EARTH.

THUS, AS THE CRYSTAL COULD LOCATE THEM EVEN WERE THEY DEAD...

...WE MUST CONCLUDE THEY HAVE SOMEHOW **VANISHED** FROM THIS SPHERE OF EXISTENCE.

IT WOULD TAKE AN **ETERNITY** TO SEEK THEM OUT WITH ALL THE **COSMOS** AS OUR HUNTING GROUND. CAN WE NOT AWAIT SOME **SIGN**...

...AND TURN OUR EFFORTS NOW TO TRACKING DOWN THE **HEADMEN**?

NO, VAL. NOT WHILE JACK'S BODY STILL LIES SEPARATE FROM ITS CONSCIOUSNESS, ITS **SOUL**.

UNLESS HIS MIND IS SOON REUNITED WITH HIS **CORPOREAL** FORM--THE LATTER WILL SURELY **PERISH**.

MAGICIAN AND GIRL TALK TOO MUCH--MIX UP **HULK'S** HEAD, TOO!

HULK IS LEAVING--TO FIND **HULK'S** FRIEND **BAMBI**! MAYBE COME BACK--MAYBE **NOT**!

THE **JADE GIANT** MAKES HIS EXIT ALMOST **UNNOTICED**. FOR THE **MAGE** IS OCCUPIED WITH HIS **CRYSTAL**. AND **VALKYRIE**...

WHY DOES THE THOUGHT OF HIS DYING... **DISTURB** ME SO?

I AM NOT **TRULY** HIS WIFE, AFTER ALL. MY **PERSONA** MERELY OCCUPIES THE BODY WHICH **ONCE** BELONGED TO **BARBARA NORRIS**.

I'VE NONE OF HER MEMORIES NOR EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENTS. SO WHAT **DRAWS** ME TO REACH OUT, TO **TOUCH** HIM...

...YET COMPELS ME TO **PULL BACK**?

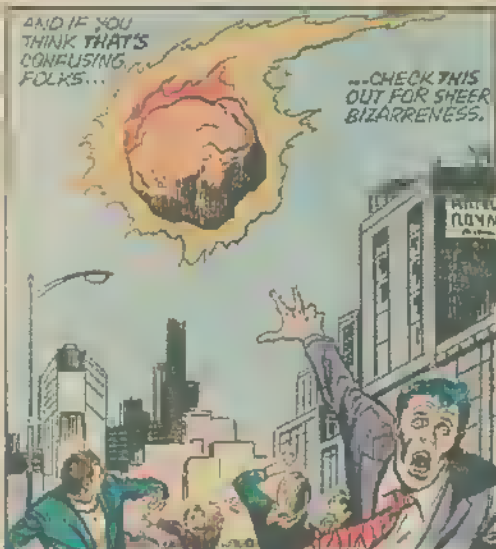
A WORD OF **CAUTION**, VAL.

STEPHEN? YOU HEARD--?

YOU'VE NOT YET LEARNED TO CARRY ON THESE DIALOGUES WITH YOURSELF IN THE **PRIVACY** OF YOUR THOUGHTS. YOU **SHOULD**.

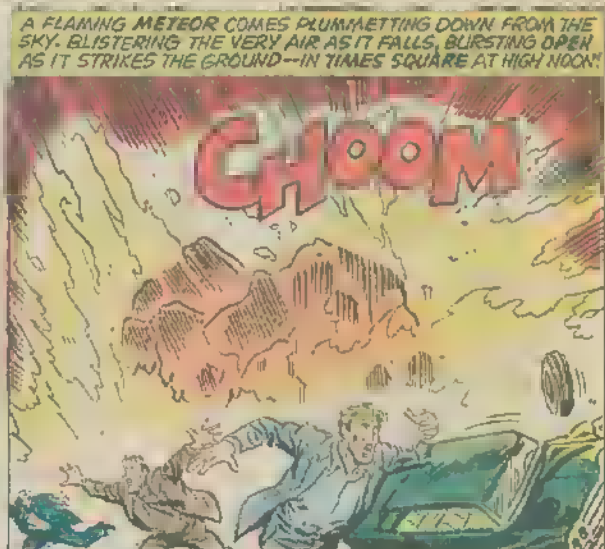
ESPECIALLY SO NOW... AS IT SEEMS YOU'VE MADE **CONTACT** WITH **BARBARA'S** SUPPRESSED CONSCIOUSNESS.

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE



AND IF YOU THINK THAT'S CONFUSING, FOLKS...

...CHECK THIS OUT FOR SHEER BIZARRENESS.



A FLAMING METEOR COMES PLUMMETTING DOWN FROM THE SKY, BLISTERING THE VERY AIR AS IT FALLS, BURSTING OPEN AS IT STRIKES THE GROUND--IN TIMES SQUARE AT HIGH NOON!



NOW THAT WOULD BE ODD ENOUGH...



...EVEN WITHOUT THE SLIGHT UNIMPOSING FIGURE...



...WHO SAUNTERS OUT OF THE CENTER OF THE INFERNO AND SAYS:

HELLO, NEW YORK.



FREEZE, KISTER! YOU'RE UNDER ARREST! YOU COULDA KILLED SOMEBODY WITH A BLAMED FOOL STUNT LIKE THIS!

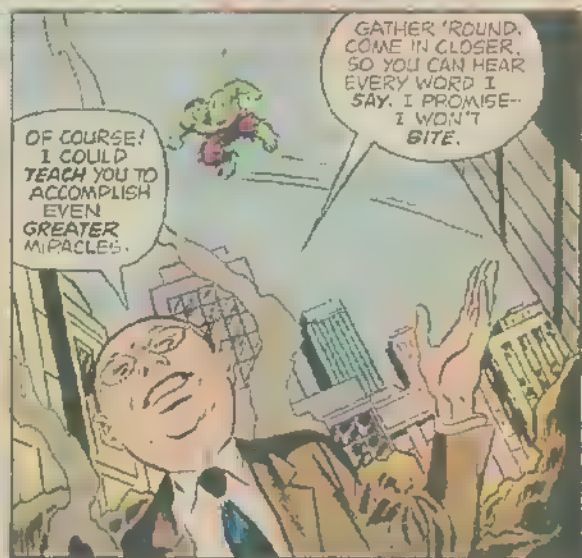
NONSENSE.



IT'S JUST A LITTLE TRICK I DO WITH MY MIND. THERE WAS NO DANGER WHATEVER.

I COULD TRAVEL TO WORK THIS WAY EVERY DAY, IF I WANTED TO. AND SO COULD ANY OF YOU.

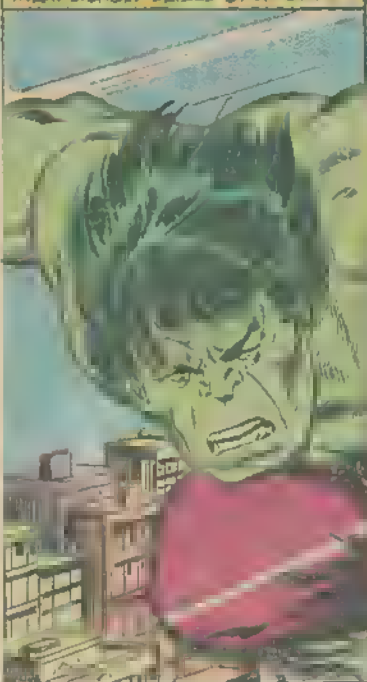
YEAH...?



OF COURSE! I COULD TEACH YOU TO ACCOMPLISH EVEN GREATER MIRACLES.

GATHER 'ROUND. COME IN CLOSER, SO YOU CAN HEAR EVERY WORD I SAY. I PROMISE-- I WON'T BITE.

FROM ABOVE, THE HULK, CARRYING ON HIS SEARCH FOR THE MISSING FAWN, SPIES THE THROG CONGREGATING ABOUT THE BESPECTACLED BALD MAN... AND IS SUDDENLY, INEXPLICABLY SEIZED BY RAGE.



HIS RESPONSE IS--OR SEEMS--INSTINCTUAL. THE SIGHT ITSELF IS SOMEHOW...WRONG, EVEN IF HE CAN'T PIN DOWN WHY.



AND SO, HE LANDS.

AND BECAUSE SOMETHING IN HIS HEAD TELLS HIM TO--HE ATTACKS, CONCLUDING ENTIRELY IRRATIONALLY THAT...

FOUR-EYES STOLE HULK'S FRIEND SAMBI!!



AND THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER IS...

...HE'S ABSOLUTELY RIGHT!

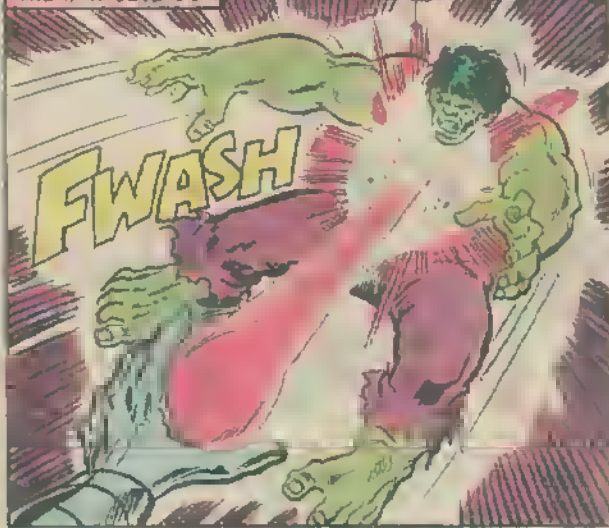


AS THE GREEN GOLIATH'S FIST THRUSTS MIGHTILY OUTWARD, ITS SLOPE-SHOULDERED, UNMUSCULAR, BRITTLE-BONED TARGET UNDERGOES A MARKED CHANGE IN APPEARANCE.

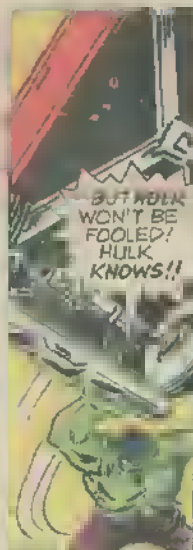
SILENT, IMPERTURBABLE, THE CELESTIAL MAN GRIPS THE HULK'S MASSIVE FIST IN ONE POWER-CHARGED HAND...WHILE SLOWLY LIFTING THE OTHER.



THEN, HE LETS GO.



FWASH



"CAN YA BEAT THAT? HE TOOK OUT THE FREAKIN' MULK," CRIES A VOICE FROM THE CROWD--AND CHEERS AND APPLAUSE.

FOR A MOMENT...YOU LOOKED ALMOST...
BEAUTIFUL!

I AM
BEAUTIFUL.

WHAT YOU SAW WAS A PHYSICAL MANIFESTATION OF MY TRUE SELF. YOU HAVE ONE JUST LIKE IT.



WANT TO
LEARN HOW TO
UNLOCK IT?

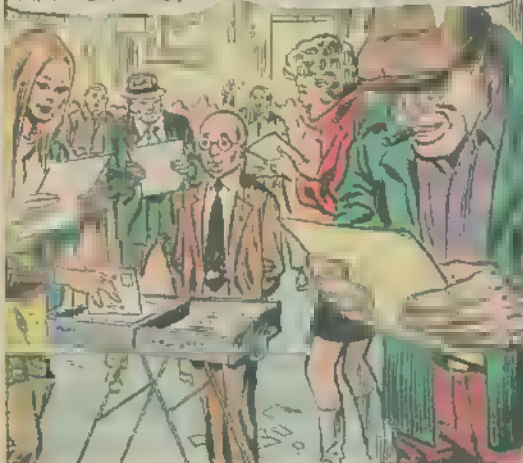
PARADISE
PLAZA
HOTEL
8 P.M.
TONIGHT

FREE
SEMINAR IN
**CELESTIAL
MIND
CONTROL**



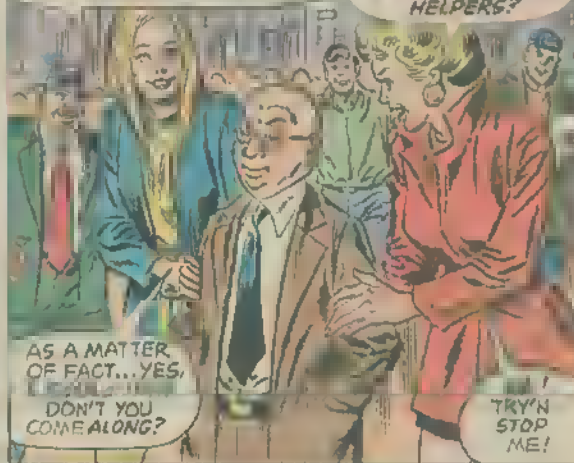
Y-YOU MEAN IT? YOU CAN TEACH ME TO DO THAT--FOR FREE?

HECK, EVEN IF IT AIN'T ON THE LEVEL, IT'S WORTH GOIN' --TO BE ENTERTAINED.



HOW ABOUT IF I REFUSE TO LET YOU OUT OF MY SIGHT, GORGEOUS? WOULD YOU OBJECT?

MMM...MAYBE YOU COULD USE A COUPLE OF FAIR-LOOKING HELPERS?



AS A MATTER OF FACT...YES, DON'T YOU COME ALONG?

TRY'N
STOP
ME!

FUNNY. GREENSKIN WAS JUST THINKING THE SAME THING, THOUGH IT'S PLAIN TO HIM NOW...



...THAT IF HE WANTS TO BE STOPPED...

...HE'LL JUST HAVE TO DO IT HIMSELF...



...AND ACCEPT THE CONSEQUENCES.



SHORTLY, BACK IN MID-TOWN MANHATTAN...

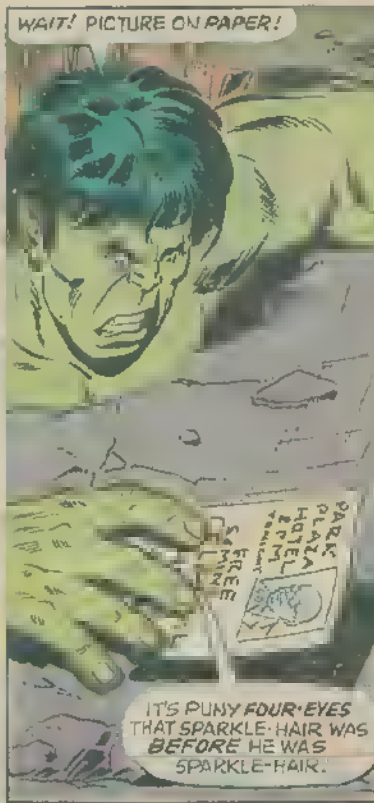


HULK IS BACK...



... BUT SPARKLE- HAIR IS GONE.

WAIT! PICTURE ON PAPER!



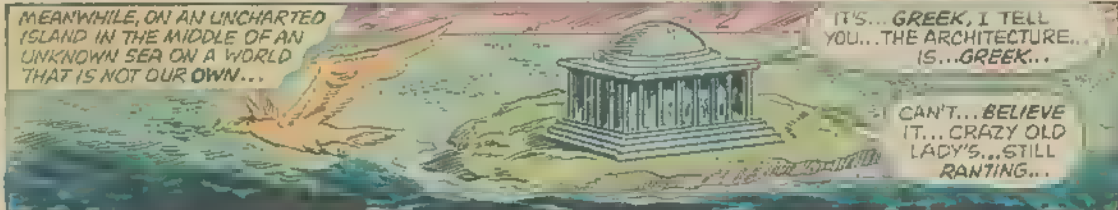
IT'S PUNY FOUR-EYES THAT SPARKLE- HAIR WAS BEFORE HE WAS SPARKLE- HAIR.

HULK WILL TAKE PICTURE TO MAGICIAN! MAGICIAN WILL HELP HULK FIND SPARKLE- HAIR-- AND HULK'S FRIEND BAMBI--



-- IF MAGICIAN IS DONE TALKING YET!

MEANWHILE, ON AN UNCHARTED ISLAND IN THE MIDDLE OF AN UNKNOWN SEA ON A WORLD THAT IS NOT OUR OWN...



IT'S... GREEK, I TELL YOU... THE ARCHITECTURE... IS... GREEK...

CAN'T... BELIEVE IT... CRAZY OLD LADY'S... STILL RANTING...

IT'S... GREEK...

NO, IT ISN'T... IT'S LUDBER- SOMETHING... OR NEBU- SOMETHING...

... OR SOME THING.

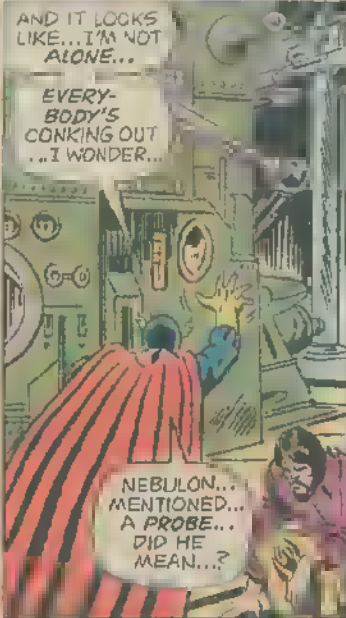
LORD, I FEEL WEAK...!



AND IT LOOKS LIKE... I'M NOT ALONE...

EVERY- BODY'S CONKING OUT ... I WONDER...

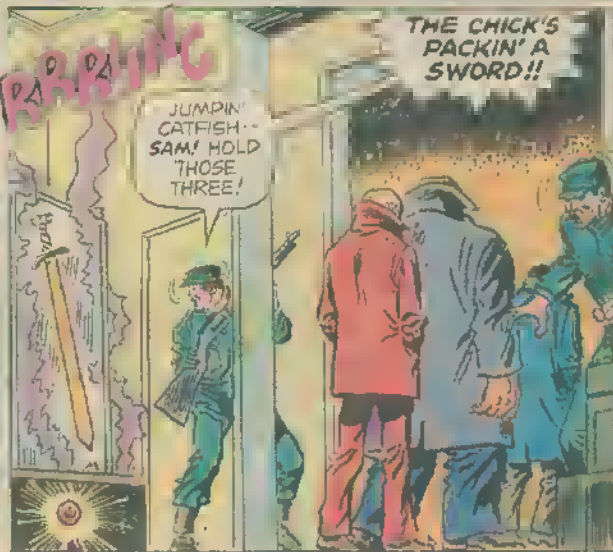
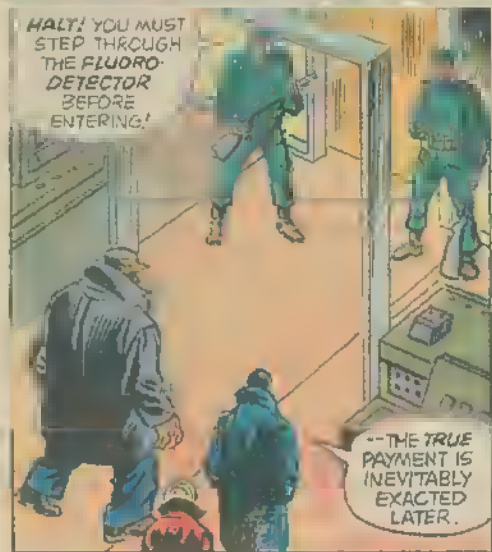
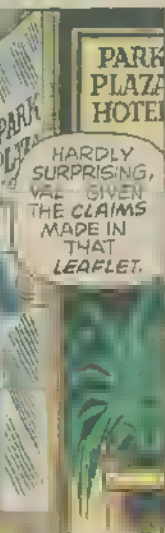
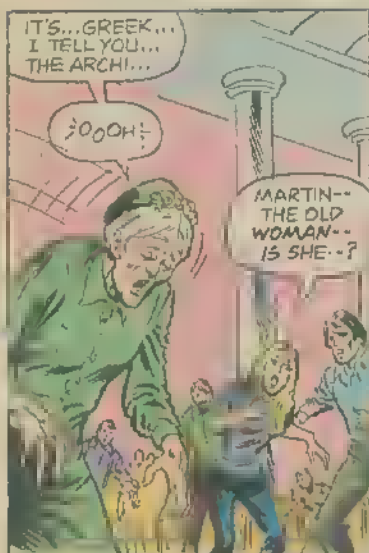
NEBULON... MENTIONED... A PROBE... DID HE MEAN...?



UNNNH? C-CAN'T STAND UP... KNEES BUCKLING... AND... THAT DIAL... GOING CRAZY...

MACHINE... DRAINING... OUR VERY LIVES AWAY...!





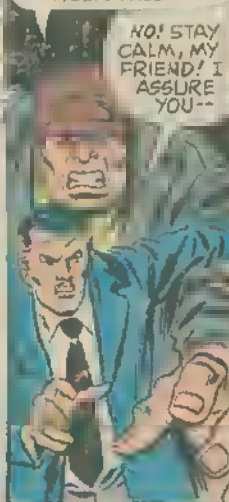
SORRY, SISTER--
NOT ANOTHER
SYEP 'TIL WE
CHECK YOU
OUT!

THERE'S A LOTTA WACKOS IN
THIS WORLD WHO'D LIKE TO
ASSASSINATE OUR LEADER--
AN' NONE OF 'EM ARE GETTIN'
INTO THAT AUDITORIUM!



SOLDIERS GRAB GIRL!
HULK WILL--

NO! STAY
CALM, MY
FRIEND! I
ASSURE
YOU--



"--MY SPELL OF CONCEALMENT IS
THE ONLY PROTECTION SHE RE-
QUIRES."

I DON'T GET IT!
THE MACHINE--



IT'S A
TRICK.

KEEP ME COVERED
--WHILE I FRISK
'ER!

NO.



LISTEN, BLONDIE, I'M IN
CHARGE HERE, AN'--



--AND IF YOU LAY
EVEN ONE OF YOUR
GRIMY FINGERS
ANYWHERE UPON
MY PERSON--

--I SHALL HAVE TO
SQUEEZE THIS SKINNY
LITTLE WRIST OF YOURS
UNTIL WE BOTH HEAR
IT GO CRUNCH.

HAVE I MADE
MY POSITION
CLEAR?



I THOUGHT SO. AND IN THE FUTURE, I
TRUST YOU'LL BE MORE CAUTIOUS
ABOUT SUCH PRESUMPTUOUS
CONDUCT.

HER GRIP
--LIKE A
BLASTED
BEAR TRAP!
I SWEAR
MY HAND'S
NUMB!

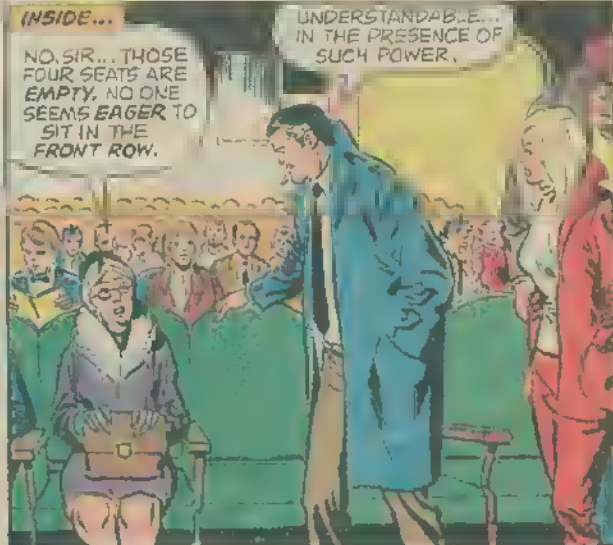
I SHOULD
LET 'EM
GO, HUH?



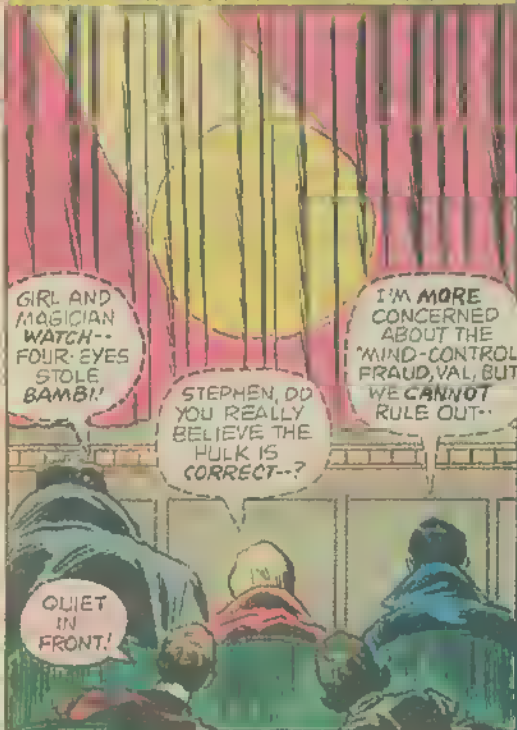
INSIDE...

NO, SIR... THOSE
FOUR SEATS ARE
EMPTY. NO ONE
SEEMS EAGER TO
SIT IN THE
FRONT ROW.

UNDERSTANDABLE...
IN THE PRESENCE OF
SUCH POWER.



THE HOUSELIGHTS DIM. A HUSH FALLS OVER THE CROWD. A SPOT HITS THE VELVET CURTAIN. THE ROOM IS CHARGED WITH ELECTRIC ANTICIPATION.



GIRL AND MAGICIAN WATCH-- FOUR EYES STOLE BAMBI!

STEPHEN, DO YOU REALLY BELIEVE THE PULK IS CORRECT--?

I'M MORE CONCERNED ABOUT THE "MIND-CONTROL" FRAUD, VAL, BUT WE CANNOT RULE OUT--

QUIET IN FRONT!

GREETINGS, FOLKS! I'M **HERE** TONIGHT TO SET YOU ON THE PATH TO A FULLER, MORE FRUITFUL, MORE PRODUCTIVE LIFE.

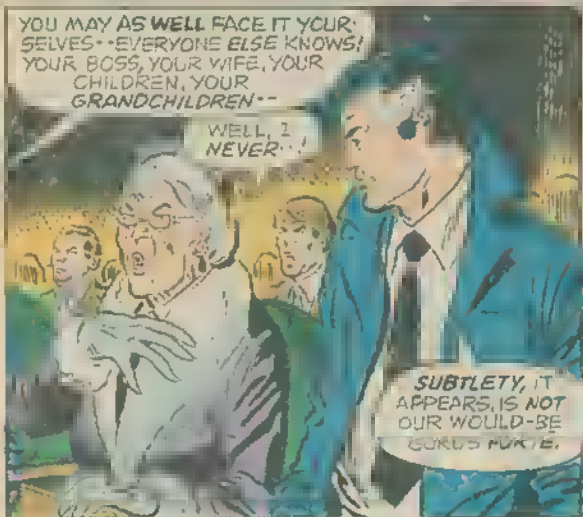


IT'S WITHIN THE GRASP OF EACH OF YOU-- NEW HOPE, NEW SELF-CONFIDENCE.

BUT FIRST YOU MUST ADMIT TO YOURSELVES WHAT A STINKING MESS YOU'VE MADE OF EVERYTHING SO FAR-- HOW **STUPIDLY** YOU'VE ARRANGED YOUR LIVES--HOW LITTLE ANY OF YOU KNOW ABOUT ANYTHING!



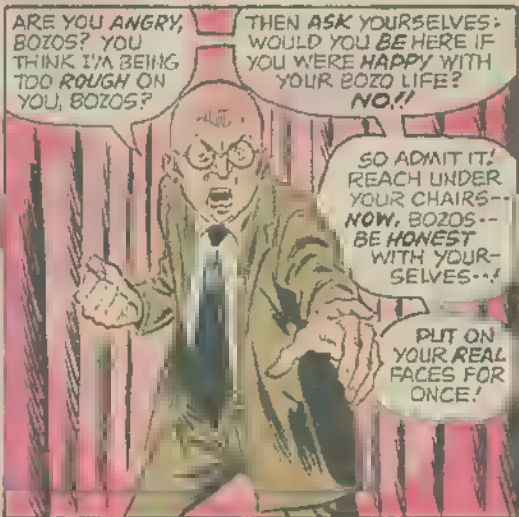
ADMIT IT-- YOU'RE ALL **BOZOS!**



YOU MAY AS WELL FACE IT YOURSELVES--EVERYONE ELSE KNOWS! YOUR BOSS, YOUR WIFE, YOUR CHILDREN, YOUR GRANDCHILDREN--

WELL, I NEVER--

SUBTLETY, IT APPEARS, IS NOT OUR WOULD-BE GURU'S FORTÉ.



ARE YOU ANGRY, BOZOS? YOU THINK I'M BEING TOO ROUGH ON YOU, BOZOS?

THEN ASK YOURSELVES-- WOULD YOU BE HERE IF YOU WERE HAPPY WITH YOUR BOZO LIFE? **NO!!**

SO ADMIT IT! REACH UNDER YOUR CHAIRS-- NOW, BOZOS-- BE HONEST WITH YOURSELVES--

PUT ON YOUR REAL FACES FOR ONCE!

THE AUDIENCE COMPLIES.



THAT'S RIGHT! EXPOSE YOURSELVES FOR THE BOZOS YOU REALLY ARE!

YOU--THE BOZO IN THE FRONT ROW--COME UP HERE ON-STAGE...

STEPHEN... I THINK HE MEANS YOU...!

VERY WELL, THEN... LET'S SEE WHAT HE WANTS.

NOT WHAT I WANT, BOZO! SEE? YOU'RE SUCH A BOZO YOU FORGOT YOU'RE HERE FOR WHAT YOU WANT OUT OF LIFE!

THAT IS NOT SO.

I MERELY FIND THIS A CURIOUS PATH TO ENLIGHTENMENT.

STILL HIDING BEHIND THAT MASK OF SOBRIETY, HUH, BOZO? NEED MORE CONVINCING, EH?

OPEN THE CURTAIN!

B! Z! BOZO BOZO BOZO BOZO BOZO O! O!

MEET THE RANDOM SAMPLING OF HUMANITY WHOSE BRAINS REVEALED THE SECRET OF CELESTIAL MIND CONTROL TO ME.

SEE WHAT THEY THINK OF YOU!

EYES OF OSHTUR!!

HUH!! DIDN'T HULK TELL GIRL!! FOUR-EYES TOOK BAMBI-- AND BIRD-NOSE, TOO!

NOW HULK WILL SMASH

NO! STAY HERE-- WITH ME!

IF STEPHEN CAN ENDURE THIS WITH PATIENCE-- SO MUST WE!

B O Z O

YOU'RE A BOZO BOZO BOZO!



WHAT I AM, SIR...IS
GROSSLY OFFENDED,
AND CURIOUS AS TO
WHAT YOU'VE DONE
TO THESE PEOPLE.



THAT FACE! I KNOW
YOU! I KNOW WHO YOU
ARE!

UNLIKELY...AND
NOT PERTINENT.
I DEMAND AN
EXPLANATION--



AND YOU
SHALL HAVE IT,
SORCERER!
BEHOLD!



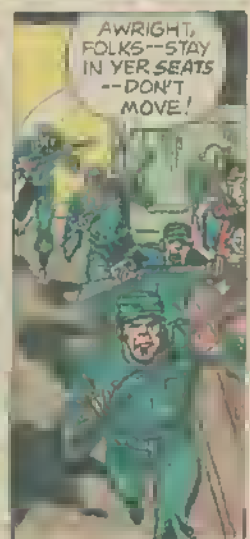
HELA'S GHOSTS!
NEBULON!!

CURSE YOUR
INABILITY TO
RECALL NAMES,
HULK!

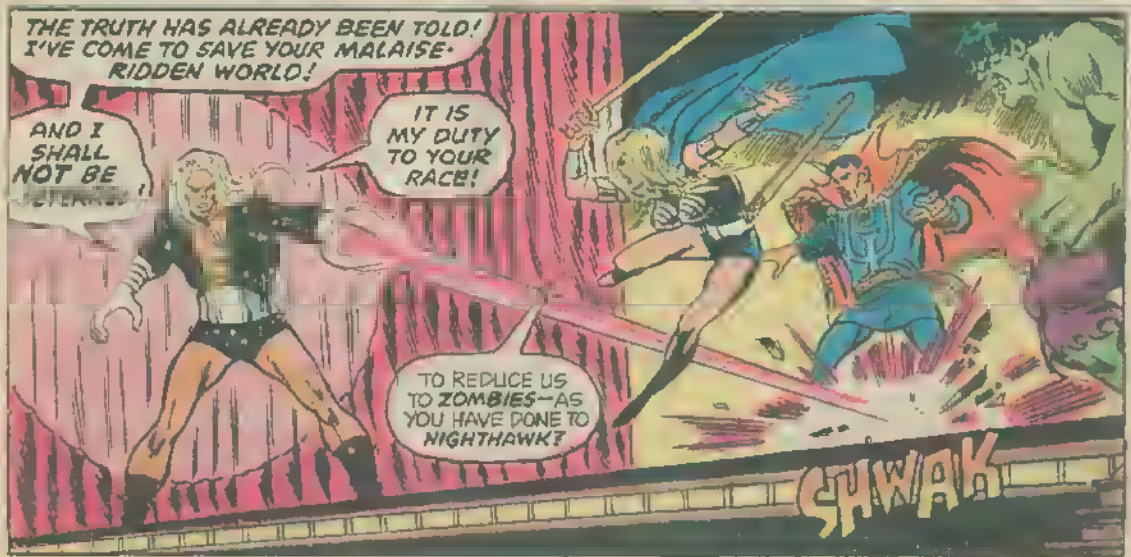
WHAT DOES
STUPID NAME
MATTER?
HULK CAN
SMASH
ANYBODY--
ALL THE SAME
TO HULK!



THE EXPLANATION,
NEBULON. IS IT
FORTHCOMING, OR
MUST WE FORCE IT
FROM YOU?



AWRIGHT,
FOLKS--STAY
IN YER SEATS
--DON'T
MOVE!



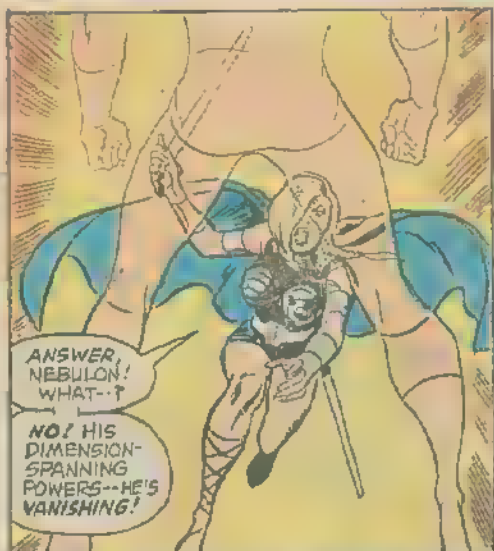
THE TRUTH HAS ALREADY BEEN TOLD!
I'VE COME TO SAVE YOUR MALAISE-
RIDDEN WORLD!

AND I
SHALL
NOT BE
DEFERRED!

IT IS
MY DUTY
TO YOUR
RACE!

TO REDUCE US
TO ZOMBIES--AS
YOU HAVE DONE TO
NIGHTHAWK?

SHWAK!



ANSWER,
NEBULON!
WHAT--?

NO! HIS
DIMENSION-
SPANNING
POWERS--HE'S
VANISHING!

BUT ONLY AS FAR AS
STAGE-RIGHT.

THIS
INTERRUPTION WAS UN-
SCHEDULED, BOZOS, BUT
I HOPE YOU'LL BE SO
KIND AS TO STAY AND
OBSERVE ITS FINISH.



THESE COSTUMED SAVAGES
INTEND TO DEPRIVE YOU OF
YOUR OPPORTUNITY FOR
TRUE HAPPINESS.

WATCH--AS THEY
FALL BEFORE THE
INCOMPARABLE
WRIGHT OF



--CELESTIAL
MIND
CONTROL!!



UNNGH

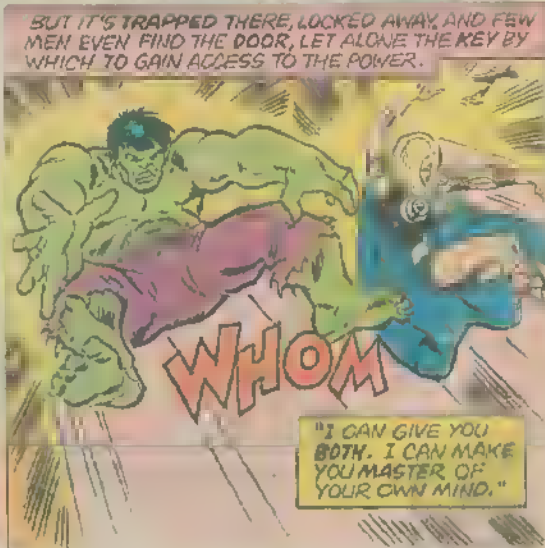
OOOH

CHUD

WHUK



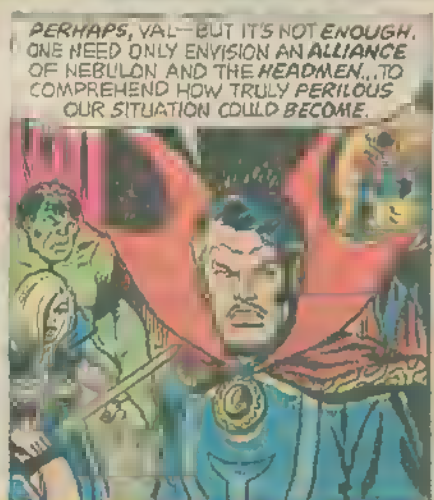
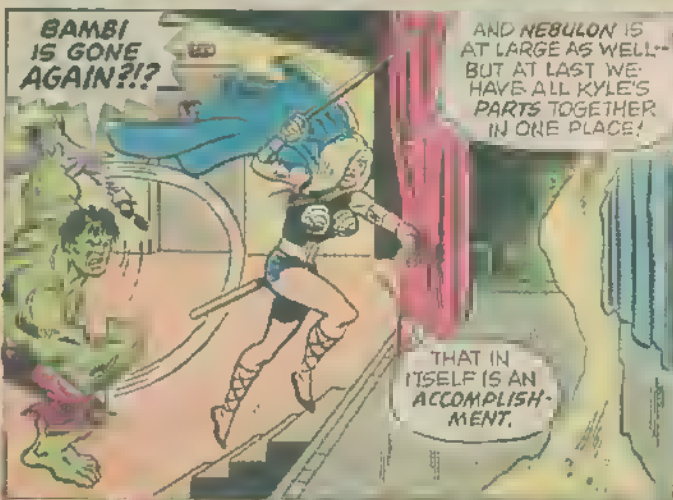
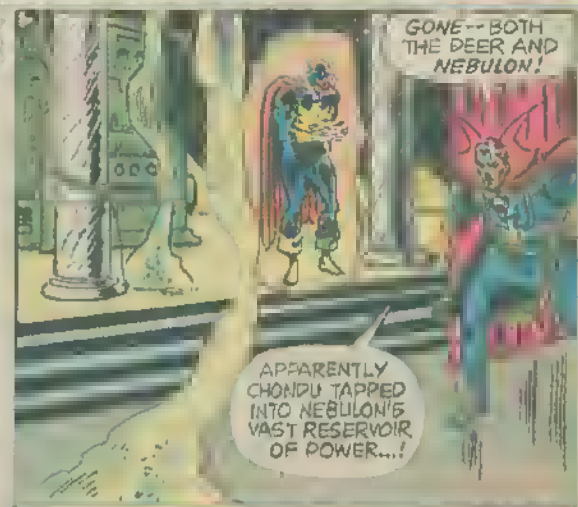
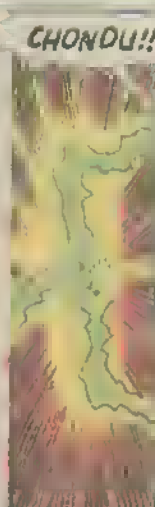
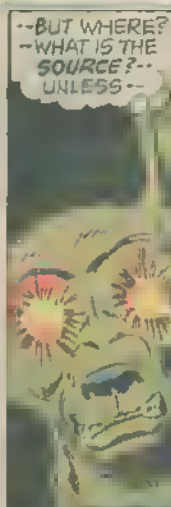
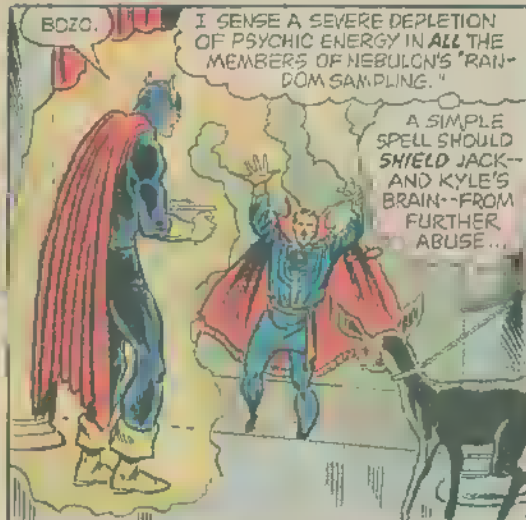
"POWER OF THIS MAGNITUDE CAN BE AT YOUR FINGER-
TIPS, TOO, MY FRIENDS. INDEED, YOU POSSESS IT NOW
AND HAVE SINCE BIRTH... IN YOUR OWN MINDS.



BUT IT'S TRAPPED THERE, LOCKED AWAY, AND FEW
MEN EVEN FIND THE DOOR, LET ALONE THE KEY BY
WHICH TO GAIN ACCESS TO THE POWER.

WHOM

"I CAN GIVE YOU
BOTH. I CAN MAKE
YOU MASTER OF
YOUR OWN MIND."



NEXT The **"RETURN"** OF THE **RED GUARDIAN!**